

Minutes of the Imperial Valley/Mexicali Air Quality Taskforce Meeting

UABC, Mexicali Campus

March 22nd, 2007, Mexicali, Baja California

Co-Chairs: Brad Poiriez and Daniel Delgadillo.

Attendance:

Brad Poiriez, Assistant APCO (Air Pollution Control Officer), Imperial County Air Pollution Control District; **Dave Fege**, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, San Diego Office; **Efrain Nieblas**, UABC Mexicali Institute of Engineering; **Lourdes Meza**, UABC Mexicali; **Jesus Jimenez Payan**, PROFEPA assistant delegate for Baja California; **Margarito Quintero**, UABC Mexicali Institute of Engineering; **Rebeca Morales Corella**, Clean Air Initiative; **Monique Lopez**, Clean Air Initiative; **Alicia Ching**, Baja California Interpreters and Translators Association; **Dixie Butts**, UABC Law School graduate; **Israel Flores**, Baja California Secretariat of Environmental Protection, representing Daniel Delgadillo; **Emmanuel Sanchez**, Taskforce Liaison, Imperial County Air pollution Control District; **Dr. Carlos de La Parra**, COLEF; **Rick Van Schoik**, Southwestern Consortium for Environmental Research and Policy; **Saul Guzman**, SEMARNAT.

Commitments

- ❖ **Brad Poiriez** will contact Bob C. about the brick kiln project and also will distribute information about the energy plant company IPL to the group.

I. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Brad Poiriez welcomed everyone and introduced himself as the co-chair for the taskforce. He pointed out to all the other members that there were English and Spanish handouts of the agenda, and additional information pamphlets, also mentioning that **Dave Fege** had brought copies of the midterm Border 2012 Project Report, and invited everyone to take the time to acquire these and sign in before starting.

II. Self-Introductions

III. Review of Minutes from Last Meeting

Brad Poiriez asked all members in attendance whether they had reviewed the Minutes, and for anyone who wished to make changes to express so at this time. There was one request.

Margarito Quintero requested a clarification on the last paragraph of the second page of the Spanish Version Minutes where it states that funding has been approved for the Monitoring system Network and the agreement with EPA is on the verge of being signed for a 3-year transfer of the network. He mentioned that it was confusing as to whether it would be done in 3 years or only for a 3-year period.

Israel Flores replied that during last week's signing of the agreement it was said that it would be a gradual transfer to the Baja California State Government where EPA would support this transition with training, laboratory analysis, and constant reviews, and at the end of these 3 years, Baja California State Government would have most of the responsibility for the monitoring system.

Dave Fege assured **Margarito Quintero** that US EPA would indeed continue to support the monitoring system even after the transfer.

Brad Poiriez asked all members if they had any other changes to last meetings minutes. None were requested. He mentioned a request made by OGMA interpreters regarding the exclusion of the presentations on the minutes; they would still translate during the presentations but would only include the Q&A section on the Minutes, resulting in a shorter version of the Minutes and a faster turnaround. He asked if everyone agreed, there were no objections. He then went on to some quick notes regarding his commitment on the Silicon Border Project, where he stated that there have been no changes or movements up to that date.

Also he mentioned the Imperial County Board of Supervisors is supporting an Assembly Bill 89, which is a funding mechanism for economic development and infrastructure projects along the border. It will help alleviate the air quality at the border.

IV. Presentations Q & A

Mexicali Emissions Inventory Update, Israel Flores, Baja California Secretariat of Environmental Protection

Margarito Quintero Asked if any Mexican companies would be hired for the project.

Israel Flores responded that even though ERG is responsible for the project it will subcontract local companies to gather data, perform tests, etc. so Mexican companies will in fact participate in the project.

Jesus Jimenez Payan posed the question of why metals are not considered in the studies, only particles; he questions what is in the particles that we breathe, and suggested that including metals would be a great opportunity to add this to the studies, particularly since it is known that Mexicali soil is toxic.

Israel Flores replied simply that it was originally contemplated, but that funding could not cover it; he also mentioned that a monthly sample is taken and it is studied for toxic content by the monitoring system.

Jesus Jimenez Payan stated they could perhaps seek out the support of universities or other institutions, etc. so those samples do not go to waste and be able to determine what exactly is contained in those particles; he assured that he understood the lack of funding but that there could be other ways to achieve these results.

Efrain Nieblass commented that what the State Government is doing is an inventory and not an analysis, supporting Israel Flores's reply. He added that he has had some discussion on the matter with Dr. Mario Molina and UCSD faculty members about a project that could be in the works that would include part of this problem.

Israel Flores added that there is a specific study conducted in the region by Daniela Rojas where it analyzes the possible aluminum content in particles and that it can be considered for this purpose.

Margarito Quintero asked how Imperial Valley prepares their emissions inventory, that is, whether they use an outside company or staff from their institution, he also asked if staff from the Secretariat of Environmental Protection would be involved in this project along with the contractor, ERG.

Brad Poiriez responded that his Agency, the imperial county APCD, collects emissions data and submits it to a state computer program called CEDARS. The state is responsible for compiling and QC all data from every air district in the State of California. They do collect their own data from the stationary sources and send an annual report to the State. Mobile emissions data is only collected by the state, Imperia Valley does not have jurisdiction over this.

David Fege asked if there were any more questions and also mentioned that there might be funding for an emissions inventory for Tecate, Tijuana and Rosarito. He will know next month if funding is granted.

Israel Flores mentioned, in regards to Margarito Quintero's question, that staff from his secretariat will be working alongside the ERG staff in this project, and commented that ERG was the company selected to do Mexico's Nationwide Inventory supported by the Western Governors Association.

Brad Poiriez asked if there were any more questions for Israel Flores.

Carlos de la Parra asked how the inventory methodologies will be made compatible with Imperial County and the rest of México.

Israel Flores answered that he did not have the specifics, but that when they met to organize the inventory structure for the project they had to try and involve all of the different aspects of both parties so it could be compatible with Imperial County and SEMARNAT. These would have 90% more compatibility with Imperial County than SEMARNAT.

Carlos de la Parra asked if Saul Guzman if he knew anything more about the subject.

Saul Guzman replied that what SEMARNAT is doing is to get the inventories to be compatible with the 4 most important areas for making an inventory, that way it will be compatible with any type of inventory, whether Imperial County's or SEMARNAT's.

Dave Fege added that Mexico needs a national Inventory, so Mexico needs to be consistent in the interior and the border region inventories and they also need to be compatible with the US standards, not exactly identical but with enough similarities to be useful.

Brad Poiriez shared that the issue of transportation of pollutants between the two countries will affect the planning efforts on the US side of the border due to the unattainment status changing to a severe level. More stringent regulations on industry will have to be adopted in Imperial County to reduce impact. He believes that with this project methodologies will be similar on both sides so they will compliment each other.

Carlos de la Parra commented that there is no doubt that what happens on one side of the border affects the other. He stated that his question was more on what else is

needed to make these emissions inventory comparable or compatible for both sides of the border and the rest of México.

EPA Funded Projects, Dave Fege, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Brick kiln pilot project

Rick Van Schoik mentioned that they were actually only going to retire 5 old brick kilns, not be building 5 new ones.

Dave Fege responded that indeed they were going to replace old ones and substitute them with new ones.

Rick Van Schoik asked if the number of brick kilns was proportional to the size of the population.

Israel Flores answered that it depends on the local consumption to some degree, but the majority of the product is exported to the U.S. Although hard numbers are not known, it is estimated that there are between 200-250 brick kilns in the Tijuana/Tecate/Mexicali area.

Israel Flores was asked what type of fuel was to be used in the new brick kilns, would it be a specific fuel or could they use whatever material is at hand.

Israel Flores responded that the new brick kiln technology is designed to use only wood as fuel. Sometimes other materials are used, such as garbage and tires, but these rarely used since they provide less heat energy than wood. He also mentioned that the best fuel is gas but it is very expensive to use.

Brad Poiriez asked if there were any restrictions on the type of wood that could be used, such as not being treated wood or with any chemical components like sealants; in other words, if they only use clean wood.

Israel Flores commented that sometimes they do find wood with a layer of paint, and that right now there is no regulation that prevents the brick builders from using treated wood; the goal is to be able to create these regulations and require the brick builders to only use clean wood.

Emmanuel Sanchez asked if the difference in fuel affects the life expectancy of the brick kiln.

Israel Flores stated that the kiln would not be affected, but the product itself might turn out defective and could not be sold. He also mentioned that the purpose of this project is to show the brick builders that with this new kiln they can still use the same materials as fuel but will be getting a lot more productivity, efficiency, less oven time, etc. so it would result in a very cost wise choice for the brick builders.

Brad Poiriez mentioned that Bob C. from El Paso should be contacted and asked for a link to the studies done in El Paso/ Juarez to be able to understand this project more; he will e-mail the information to the group.

Dave Fege asked if there were any more questions.

Margarito Quintero asked what the cost of these new, modern kilns would be.

Israel Flores replied that the current cost for the new kilns is around \$180,000 to \$200,000 pesos each, because the person contracted for this project, which is Dr. Corral from UABC in CD. Juarez would have to be paid for training, labor and other services. The idea is that after the initial ones are built the brick builders can construct their own and that then the estimated cost would be roughly \$30,000 pesos each.

Dave Fege added that when this grant was approved it was contemplated that the brick builders would contribute by providing labor during construction, so they could learn how to construct their own.

Marco Antonio Reyna mentioned that in Cd. Juarez these brick kilns are not yet operational, and asked what they were going to do to make them functional in our region and what would happen if the raw material for their construction was depleted.

Israel Flores replied that he had spoken with Dr. Corral and knew for a fact that they had around 30 brick kilns already constructed and already had them operating, which is half of the project. Raw material is only a commercial problem and will be dealt with accordingly.

Lourdes Meza Asked if there was any alternative fuel that could be considered and mentioned that maybe waste oil could be used like they used to in the cement industry.

Israel Flores said that this can not be viable since there is the issue of hazardous waste or a "special waste" and for the brick builders it would be a very complicated and expensive alternative.

Saul Guzman shared that SEMARNAT is working on a list of alternative fuels, and also stated that in Chiapas there is a project where alternative fuel like recycled oil is being used. Other fuel could be used, like in the cement industry but they work with very high temperatures that assure us the complete combustion of chemicals in the fuel; if that temperature cannot be reached with the brick kilns then we could be making matters worse. Also, oil recycling is very profitable in Tijuana, so most used oil is sent in for recycling.

Dave Fege asked if there were further questions on the Brick Kiln project. There were no more questions.

Truck Parking lot emissions study in Calexico Project

Monique Lopez asked if the Air Pollution Control Board would have to vote on best available control measures or if it was already in place and being implemented.

Brad Poiriez replied that this goes back to regulation 8, recently approved by the Control board, which indicates what the best available control measures are; however, they do not dictate which to use, just that one should be utilized. He also he mentioned that the main goal for this project is to identify where they are and their proximity to any

sensitive area, and then to model and extrapolate the projected emissions from that specific area.

Monique Lopez asked how the community can get involved after the analysis.

Brad Poiriez commented that they are required to submit a final report to EPA. He asked **Dave Fege** if EPA had a link where it posted a synopsis of recently finished grants.

Dave Fege stated that they do have that, and since it is a grant funded project the information is owned by the district and so that information can be posted on the website. **Brad Poiriez** mentioned that it will be posted for the public.

Rick Van Schoik Asked if it was for trucks, dust, or both.

Brad Poiriez says that it is a combination of both, where a modeling effort for combustion of idling vehicles, but it will not be an actual sampling of each truck in the yard, it will only be a model.

Mexicali Diesel Truck Retrofit Project

Brad Poiriez asked anyone who had any idea on how to get information on all trucking companies that work in the Calexico area to please share it with the group

Rebeca Morales Corella mentioned that the place to find all trucking information for Mexicali is called CANACAR.

Air Quality Monitoring Network and Real-Time Website

Monique Lopez asked if the air monitor on English Rd. was still in place.

Brad Poiriez replied that it was still there. It is one of five monitoring stations and to move any of them would require CARB and EPA approval.

Marco Antonio Reyna commented that they collect data from the monitors for correlation studies, but when this data is requested they are reminded that it is considered unverified data, and asked why not create a program that can validate the data.

Brad Poiriez shared that ARB is the agency that validates this data, and that it is a time-consuming process which involves gathering of all data, sending it out to be validated to the nearest ARB-certified lab, which is San Diego, and receiving the validated data back, so it takes a long period of time to complete.

Dave Fege stated that the data on the website cannot be validated, because otherwise it would not be available in real time, all the data is monitored and studied and it can take up to 12-18 months to be validated. The reason why the data verification is so important is because it is used by the Board and EPA to make regulations.

Saul Guzman mentioned that the information on the real-time website was still very technical, so it can be confusing to a lay person He felt that a second phase is needed to

help people identify actions they could take individually to reduce this air pollution. He added that not everyone has access to the internet, so it could be useful to use other means of advertisement such as television, radio, newspaper, etc. so that this information would be more readily available to the public.

Israel Flores said that although anyone is supposed to have access to the website, the reality is that not everyone has access. The idea of having it is so the community can be aware of air quality conditions.

Marco Antonio Reyna asked why local television stations were not used to inform the public of the website.

Israel Flores mentioned that there is in fact one television station that reports the air quality to the public, and that in the American newspapers there is always an air quality report.

PM10 Study presentation, Jesus Jimenez Payan; Assistant Delegate, PROFEPA

Formal presentation postponed for next meeting.

V. Updates

Brad Poiriez stated that there were many development projects proposed in Imperial County; for example a shopping center, ethanol plants, housing developments, and a casino.

The Air District has been working on finding more ways to reduce emissions, and one method is to project the estimated emissions that a development project would emit and determine if it exceeds the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act). If it does, they will require that company to offset those emissions back to 0%, either by paying an in-lieu fee for RFP purposes or by reducing their emissions themselves. Once a fee is collected the Air District starts bidding for new projects using newspaper ads for notification. He also mentioned the LG pipeline that will come from Rosarito/ Ensenada to Mexicali / Imperial County and is concerned about the hot gas produced which burns hotter and affects the ozone layer; another concern is discussions about a Florida-based company that would use any type of waste (hazardous, landfill, etc.) to create an energy plant in Cerro Prieto, and is also proposing to expand his staff because of the large number of projects coming to Imperial County.

Dave Fege asked if the Air District formally notifies the Mexicali officials about the new development projects that are coming like the ethanol plants.

Brad Poiriez replied that the Air District does not but that he believes that the Planning Department does notify Baja California authorities.

Dave Fege also asked if Israel Flores knew any information about the company that would build the Energy plant in Cerro Prieto.

Brad Poiriez shared that it was a company called IPL and to his understanding the waste used would be from local sources and the energy produced would also be for local consumption, so there would be no transportation of any kind across the border.

Israel Flores commented that he did not have information about this company and he would start to investigate. He asked **Brad Poiriez** for formal information; Brad Poiriez replied that he will share all information with TF members via e-mail.

Efrain Nieblas shared with the group that the person that might know of this company is Manuel Zamora from the Mexicali Directorate of Ecology, since it has been the agency involved in the permitting process.

Jesus Jimenez Payan shared that PROFEPA has been working on their new Operating program for 2007 in which they are applying Norm 026 from the Health Secretariat on inspections for Industrial companies, so it can be determined if during the transformation process of the natural resources they could emit traces of lead to the environment. He stated that this has already gone into effect with three companies, two from Tijuana and one in Mexicali.

Israel Flores commented that in October of 2005 the General Directorate of Ecology changed its name to the Secretariat of Environmental Protection, but at the time continued working under the same organizational structure, and since last Friday a new organizational structure became official. This will make it possible to have better control, efficiency and criteria for permits, policies and project execution at the state level.

Rebeca Morales Corella added that the Clean Air Initiative new Coordinator was **Monique Lopez**.

Monique Lopez asked which are the 4 projects that will be subjected to the in-lieu fee, and where are they located.

Brad Poiriez stated that it would be the two Ethanol Facilities, the Plaza Project and the Commerce Project. Then **Monique Lopez** asked if the 100% mitigation required of the development projects was the in-lieu fee.

Brad Poiriez responded that it was only one of three options given to the development projects if they were above the permitted emissions. These would always need to be offset down to 0%; one option is to create their own projects to reduce their emissions with the supervision of the Air District; the second is the in-lieu fee for the entire amount of emissions; and third is a combination of both in which the company can reduce some of the emissions and pay an in-lieu fee for the rest.

Monique Lopez requested an example of what type of project would reduce their emissions, to which **Brad Poiriez** responded that one example was combustion engines: in this case, the combustion engine would be destroyed under the Air District's supervision and would be replaced by an electric engine. **Monique Lopez** asked if heavy metals were monitored by the Air District. **Brad Poiriez** answered that this was under State jurisdiction, that there was only one air monitor in place for heavy metals, and that currently there was no offsets for heavy metals.

Monique Lopez asked when the EIR would come out for the Cillian Ethanol Facility.

Brad Poiriez said the Air District did not exactly know when this would be completed since they are not the lead agency, but that they did not deem it complete yet due to the lack of some information that was required by the Air District.

The Air District is considered a third party in the EIR process so they do not have control over the entire process.

Rebeca Morales Corella shared that the Baja California Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters had had a meeting last week and named Mr. Carlos Diaz de Leon from Ogma Translating & Interpreting Services as their new President.

Brad Poiriez mentioned that the Air Policy Forum would be having a meeting in Cd. Juarez on April 10 & 11. Also in May the Border 2012 National Coordinators meeting will be held in San Antonio.

VI. - Wrap-Up / Date of Next meeting.

No meeting date was set. Taskforce members will be informed of the date of the next meeting via e-mail.

Session Adjourned.